

our entire nation. I offer my deep appreciation and thanks for the outstanding leadership that John has provided over his impressive career in protecting this country's natural resources, fighting for the health of our communities and forging a more rationale and sustainable future. Though he is retiring as NRDC's president, I am grateful that he will remain involved in as the organization's founding director so that the environmental movement can continue to benefit from his wisdom and experience. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my very best wishes for the future to John, Patricia and their family as they celebrate this important milestone.

HONORING THE POTEET HIGH
SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor the Poteet High School Pirate Marching Band for their recent victory at the University Interscholastic League State AAAA Marching Band Championship. On November 8, 2005, the Pirates competed against more than 20 other bands from across the State of Texas and won their second State Championship since 1997.

I would like to recognize the students and directors of the Poteet Pirates Marching Band, especially director Scott Coulson. Scott Coulson has been a strong role model and exceptional leader for the Poteet Pirates Marching Band.

As the Congressional representative of the students, parents, and teachers involved with the Poteet High School Marching Band, it is my pleasure to recognize their tremendous victory. This is an accomplishment that these young men and women will remember for years to come.

TRIBUTE TO TONY BENNETT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in rising before you today to recognize one of the world's greatest and most admired entertainers—Tony Bennett who was honored by the Kennedy Center on December 4, 2005.

World-renowned as an "individual of unequaled excellence," Tony Bennett has remained for over 5 decades, one of our leading male singers of traditional pop songs who has entertained all age groups with his magnificent voice and dynamic performances. Indeed, he is an American icon whose talents are timeless and who continues to be an inspiration to all generations.

It is said of Tony Bennett that he is a superb performer, a true legend of American music, and a national treasure. While all that may be true, Tony is all those things and so much more.

In addition to entertaining audiences through song, Tony Bennett is also an accomplished

painter and author, as well as a devoted philanthropist. Throughout his career, he has participated in many humanitarian causes and concerns. He has raised funds for the American Cancer Society, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, and the Hospice of Baltimore. He has worked with the Center for Handgun Control and has supported environmental issues through such organizations as Save the Rainforest and the Project for Walden Woods.

His charity concerts have also benefited many causes, namely the preservation of the Apollo Theater in my Congressional District of Harlem in New York City.

What many people may not know is that Tony Bennett served as a foot soldier in World War II, and was an active participant in the liberation of a concentration camp. In 1965, he participated in the March on Selma with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and refused to perform in South Africa during the era of apartheid.

Tony Bennett is a lifelong New Yorker born in the Astoria section of Queens. He attended the High School of Industrial Arts in Manhattan where he continued nurturing his two passions—singing and painting.

Tony's extraordinary and enduring career, took off shortly after Bob Hope discovered Bennett in a New York nightclub in 1949. That discovery has resulted in scores of albums, ten Grammy awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award, and induction into the Black Entertainment in Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to pay tribute to Tony Bennett, an extraordinary entertainer, a true humanitarian, and a champion for all people. Legions of fans of all ages and musical tastes applaud his genius, and we can be assured that the legacy of Tony Bennett will live forever.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE
THAT DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES
IN IRAQ BE TERMINATED IMMEDIATELY

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. I have no doubt that the majority of the House will oppose it, so it will be voted down.

And by voting down this resolution, we are responding to the Republican leadership's desire to have us say what we're against.

But that's the easy part. The hard part—the part that should be under discussion—is to say exactly what we are for, what policy we think our country should follow regarding our military involvement in Iraq.

The Republicans don't want to have that discussion. They would rather put forward a politicized, petty, irresponsible resolution that is intended to score political points. Like the Bush Administration, they are adopting the tactics of a political campaign, and like the Administration, their greatest success will only be to further divide Americans. How does this honor our men and women in uniform who are even now risking their lives in Iraq?

It's clear that the Republican leadership is concerned that Representative Jack Murtha's

call for the rapid redeployment of American forces and reducing our military presence in Iraq is already carrying significant weight in Congress. Why else would the Republicans seek to trivialize and play politics with this proposal from a man who is not only a decorated veteran, but one of the most respected voices in our country on military and national security policy?

Like Mr. Murtha, I believe the Bush administration has largely failed in Iraq because the civilian direction of the war has not matched the skill and sacrifice of our soldiers. Going to war the way we did was a strategic mistake, and the aftermath has been a failure because of the president's refusal to plan and refusal to listen.

I voted against the resolution authorizing the president to rush to war in the first place. I did so because I had concerns about the president's refusal to consider more aggressive inspections of WMD before going to war, his inability to secure international support, his obvious failure to develop a plan for securing peace after ousting Saddam, and his reckless disregard of experienced military advice.

Although I was an outspoken opponent of going to war in Iraq, I have supported our brave soldiers because it has seemed to me that our national security is now linked, like it or not, to a credible plan for stabilizing Iraq and preventing a catastrophic civil war in the region.

I do not think supporting our troops is a partisan matter. In fact, I know everyone on both sides of the aisle does support them. So, it is disappointing—but, unfortunately, not surprising—that some have alleged otherwise.

And, some have suggested the resolution we are voting on today is a Democratic resolution, even though it was introduced by the gentleman from California, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who of course is a Republican.

The resolution we are voting on today isn't Jack Murtha's resolution—it is a cheap ripoff of a well-intended effort on the part of a respected veteran and long-serving Member. Jack Murtha's resolution calls for the immediate termination of the deployment of our forces, but it also says that the redeployment of forces should happen at the earliest practicable date, not right away. Jack Murtha's resolution includes important safeguards such as a quick-reaction U.S. force and a presence of U.S. Marines outside of Iraq who could respond as necessary if events in Iraq were spiral out of control.

I remain concerned about setting an arbitrary date for withdrawal because how we leave is as important as when we leave. That's why I cannot support Mr. Murtha's resolution and why I certainly cannot vote for this resolution proposed by Mr. Hunter.

Nevertheless, the fact of today's debate, coupled with the evaporation of public confidence in the president's management of the war, should be a wake-up call to the president to develop a withdrawal strategy that can garner bipartisan support and set an unmistakable path toward exiting Iraq expeditiously and with our interests and security intact.

This country cannot have 535 commanders-in-chief. There can only be one commander-in-chief and we need him to address the country, explain his withdrawal strategy, and to be honest with the American people about the costs and timetable for withdrawal.